

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MAPAM POLITICAL SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH POL REPRESENTATIVE

1. SUMMARY. MAPAM POLITICAL SECRETARY FEDER'S INFORMAL MEETING ABOUT DECEMBER 8, 1974 WITH PLO DELEGATE TO WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE IN PRAGUE, AT LATTER'S INITIATIVE, HAS RECEIVED EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY AND PROVOKED STRONG ADVERSE REACTIONS IN ISRAELI POLITICAL CIRCLES. FEDER HAS PROVIDED US WITH PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF MEETING (SEE BELOW). DOMINANT CRITICISM IN ISRAEL SO FAR IS THAT FEDER-PLO MEETING HAS VIOLATED GOI DECISION NOT TO TALK WITH PLO. END SUMMARY.
2. MAPAM POLITICAL SECRETARY NAFTALI FEDER HAS PROVIDED US JANUARY 7 IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE WITH FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF MEETING WITH PLO DELEGATE TO WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE IN PRAGUE. FACT OF MEETING HAS ALREADY BEEN PUBLICIZED BY NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR AND SUBSEQUENTLY CARRIED BY ISRAELI PRESS, BUT NOT ALL DETAILS REPORTED BELOW ARE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE.
3. FEDER TOLD US THAT ON ABOUT DEC 8 JUNIOR REPRESENTATIVE OF TWO-MAN PLO DELEGATION TO WORLD PEACE CONFERENCE APPROACHED HIM IN DINING ROOM OF INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL IN PRAGUE, AND A 1-1/2 HOUR CONVERSATION ENSUED. PLO DELEGATE SAID THAT ISRAEL AND PLO SHOULD TALK TOGETHER AT GENEVA FOR PURPOSE OF WORKING OUT MODUS VIVENDI BETWEEN THEM. HE SAID THAT NEITHER GOI NOR PLO HAD TO AGREE TO RECOGNIZING EACH OTHER IN

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ADVANCE, NOR WOULD EITHER OF THEM HAVE TO GIVE UP ITS LONG-RANGE

OBJECTIVES. PLO DELEGATE SAID THAT HE IN NO WAY DISAGREED WITH CONTENT OF ARAFAT'S UN SPEECH BUT DID NOT REGARD IT AS IMPEDIMENT TO PLO-GOI TALKS.

4. ACCORDING TO PLO DELEGATE, ARAFAT VISION OF SECULAR DEMOCRATIC STATE WAS NO MORE BARRIER TO DE FACTO COEXISTENCE THAN ZIONIST VISION OF SETTling ALL OF LAND OF ISRAEL (ERETZ YISRAEL). HE BELIEVED THAT ISRAEL AND PLO COULD WORK OUT AN ACCOMMODATION FOR 50 OR 100 YEARS WITHOUT EITHER OF THEM RENOUNCING THEIR ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES.

5. IN REPLY TO FEDER'S COMMENT THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS, PLO DELEGATE SAID THAT ALL NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS HAD USED TERROR AS POLITICAL INSTRUMENT. MOREOVER, PLO WAS ROOF ORGANIZATION AND COULD NOT FULLY CONTROL ACTIVITIES OF ALL ITS COMPONENT BODIES.

6. PLO DELEGATE FURTHER SAID THAT RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL WITHIN ITS 1947 BORDERS, WHICH SOME PROPOSE AS POSSIBLE OPENING FOR TALKS, WAS NOT IMPORTANT. EVEN ASSUMING THAT PALESTINIANS HAD MADE MISTAKE IN 1947 BY REFUSAL TO ACCEPT UN PARTITION DECISION, THIS WAS NOT SUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATION FOR PENALIZING PALESTINIAN PEOPLE FOREVER BY DENYING THEM THEIR POLITICAL IDENTITY.

7. FEDER SAID THAT IN REPLY HE TOLD PLO DELEGATE, AS HIS PERSONAL JUDGMENT, THAT THERE WAS NO BASIS AT PRESENT FOR GOI-PLO TALKS. SITUATION MIGHT BE DIFFERENT IF PLO MADE SAME STATEMENTS IN PUBLIC AS IN PRIVATE.

8. FEDER TOLD US THAT HE HAS BRIEFED MFA ON PRAGUE TALKS, BUT HAS REFUSED INTERVIEW REQUESTS FROM INTERNATIONAL MEDIA. HOWEVER, HE HAS NOW CONFIRMED PUBLICLY THAT MEETING TOOK PLACE.

9. FEDER-PLO MEETING HAS BECOME HEATED POLITICAL ISSUE IN ISRAEL. AT MEETING OF LABOR ALIGNMENT KNESSET FACTION JANUARY 6, SEVERAL LABOR PARTY MK'S SHARPLY ATTACKED FEDER FOR TAKING STEP IN VIOLATION OF GOI POLICY AGAINST TALKS WITH PLO. SAME VIEW HAS BEEN EXPRESSED IN MAPAM CIRCLES. WE EXPECT
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THAT PLO-FEDER MEETING WILL NOW BECOME SUBJECT OF KNESSET DEBATE.

10. COMMENT. HEATED REACTION OF ISRAELI POLITICIANS IS NOT SURPRISING GIVEN RIGIDITY OF CURRENT GOI POLICY AND EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF ISRAELI PUBLIC ON PLO ISSUE. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, ONLY HANNAH ZEMER AMONG MAINSTREAM OF ISRAELIS HAS HAD CONVICTION AND COURAGE TO SPEAK OUT PUBLICLY AGAINST

CURRENT GOI POLICY TO PLO. GOI SO FAR HAS REFRAINED FROM ANY
PUBLIC COMMENT ON MEETING. IT MAY REGARD PLO APPROACH TO FEDER
AS TRIAL BALLOON FOR MORE PUBLIC PLO INITIATIVE LATER ON. FROM
FEDER'S REMARKS AND OUR OWN IMPRESSIONS, WE BELIEVE THAT ANY
PUBLIC PLO INVITATION TO ISRAEL TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITHOUT PRIOR
CONDITIONS WOULD CREATE VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEM FOR GOI.
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